



Habitat for Humanity House It's an Electrifying Experience for Mason Co. ATC Students



Once again, a KY Tech instructor has taken the bold step of having students apply the skills they have learned in the classroom to a worthy, real life project – for this group, it's been an electrifying experience and a real labor of love.

Mason Co. ATC Electrical Technology Instructor David Collins, *who also happens to be the 2005 KY Tech Teacher of the Year*, first heard about the Mason Co. Limestone Chapter Habitat for Humanity (HH) House project during a meeting he attended at the Maysville Community and Technical College. Upon further research, he found out that HH is a worldwide, grass roots movement whose work is accomplished on a community-by-community basis through the donation of money, supplies and labor. Given those parameters, he knew this was something that would be beneficial to all involved and decided to include his second year electrical technology students in the local HH project. So, every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday during this semester, his students are bused to the HH site for approximately 1 hour to work on a house that will *light up the lives of a lucky mother and son*.



Collins took on the responsibility of having his students provide all the labor for wiring the entire house including the service entrance, grounding system, all the lighting and receptacle outlets, pulling wire throughout the house, circuitry and wiring for the home's heating and air conditioning systems. He also took the leadership role of securing materials and parts for all the electrical work.

"I first became interested in Habitat for Humanity to provide an opportunity for my students to apply the skills they have learned in the classroom to a real life project," says Collins. "And, this is real life. We do everything according to code. After all, Mr. Gene Conley, our local state electrical inspector, has to approve our work. So far, he has made two visits and we have passed the code."

Every day prior to boarding the bus, Collins takes a few moments to huddle with his students to go over their work assignment list. "The reason for this is when they get to the house; they will know exactly what their job scope is for that day," says Collins. "If for some reason, a job does not get completed, we make sure to complete that job first thing the next day."

Photo: Instructor David Collins takes a moment to double check some of the equipment bags.

"The outcomes for both my students and the family this house is being built for are realistic and noble in principle," says Collins. "I believe these kids should do excellent work. It's our responsibility to stress that point because it will be lasting. If my students can leave school and have been part of something as substantial as building a HH house, then this is something they will always remember. They will be satisfied because they were part of a project that made sense, honed skills, and provided shelter for a family in need."





“It makes me feel good to know that we are donating our time on this project for a woman and her son who otherwise couldn’t afford to have this done with payment. I’ve gained a lot of confidence in my work by going over to the house to do the work. I think Mr. Collins is a great teacher because he has taught us how to do everything we need to know.”

Dylan Garrison, sophomore, Mason Co. HS

“Mr. Collins is a good teacher because you have fun while you are working with him. We have learned a lot over these past two years. I’ve also learned a lot by working on this Habitat for Humanity House because we are doing the real thing at a work site. It feels good that I can use my skills to help someone else. I’ve learned that before you get to a job, you have to lay it out to make sure you have everything you need to do the project.”

Travis Andrus, senior, Mason Co. HS

“I like doing this project because we can use what we learned in the shop to do something useful for someone who needs the help. It’s been enjoyable to get out of the classroom to actually wire a house Mr. Collins is an inspiring man.”

Tyler Ream, junior, Mason Co. HS

“Mr. Collins is the best teacher I’ve ever had because he makes the class interesting for everyone to learn and he knows what he is talking about. I’ve enjoyed working at the HH house because I’ve gained experience while wiring the house for the family.”

Ernesto Garcia, senior, St. Patrick School

Photo above - Members of the Mason Co. Electrical Technology 2nd year class: Back row (l to R), Dylan Garrison, Mason Co. ATC Electrical Technology Instructor David Collins, Travis Collins, Tyler Ream, Garrett Buerkley, C.H. Thompson and Ernesto Garcia; Middle row: Charlie Chander; and front row: Joe Mitchell, and Travis Andrus.



Photo: Travis Collins, a senior at Mason Co. HS, listens as David Collins gives him some directions on where to put electricity for a kitchen island.

“Mr. Collins is great at finding real life projects for us to work on in class and this Habitat for Humanity house is a perfect example. Ten years down the road, I’ll be able to say I worked in and on that house. I’ve helped with the rough in electrical by planning and laying out the circuits, pulling wires, drilling holes and mounting electrical boxes. I’ve even gone over on my own time to help with some of the pre-wiring of the switch boxes. At this stage on site, we are doing the finished electrical work by wiring switches and receptacles. I think there are somewhere around 50-60 receptacles in that house and 20-30 switches. I’m just glad to be part of the whole project because its something good. For the most part, we have all enjoyed working on this house and we have all learned something.

When I first came to Mr. Collins’ class, I didn’t have a clue about what I wanted to become. Over the past three years, Mr. Collins has made an impression on me because he knows what he is talking about and he’s always willing to help. When I graduate, I plan to be an electrician in the construction industry because I can make a good living using the skills I have learned.”



Photo above: KY Tech Area Supervisor Clifford Wells congratulated the work team of Charlie Chandler, Dylan Garrison, C.H. Thompson and Garrett Buerkley for their work in wiring the service entrance.

“Mr. Collins is a great teacher because he teaches you everything you need to know to come out into the real world.” says Buerkley.

Photo below (l to r): OCTE Deputy Executive Director Lewis Carter listens as C.H. Thompson explains his role in wiring a receptacle in the living room.

“I have always found Mr. Collins to be an outstanding teacher and this project exemplifies his interest in teaching students not only about electrical skills to make a living, but also giving back to the community through service,” says Carter. “Habitat for Humanity is something everyone can feel good about. We all salute the efforts of this teacher and the students involved in this project.”

“I was all for this project. It is a great opportunity to take what we have learned in class into the field. We call it On-The-Job-Training. This makes you feel good inside that you are helping somebody out that is less fortunate,” says Thompson. “When I graduate, I plan to work at Crowns Corporation – a tow boating business. I’ll be able to use the skills that I have learned in this classroom on that job.”





“I like helping people and this Habitat for Humanity House has made me feel good about what we have done. Years from now, I’ll be able to take pride when I drive past the house because I’ll know I had something to do with the whole project. I’ll also remember the fun I had in class by taking part in wiring the house,” says Mason Co. Senior Charles Chandler. “If you don’t know anything about electricity, this is the classroom to learn in because Mr. Collins is there for you any time you need help. He’s a very serious teacher, but knows how to make our class work fun. He talks to us in a way that we all can understand what he is trying to teach. If we don’t understand something, he will work with us until we know how to do the task.

Photo at left: Chandler gets one of the two lights ready that Joe Mitchell will install in the garage.



Photo at left: Joe Mitchell, a sophomore at Mason Co. HS, wires the electric to install one of two overhead lights in the garage.

No stranger to various occupations in the construction industry, Joe's father owns Mitchell Construction. Joe has spent the last nine summers helping his father build homes.

"I have an understanding of how a house is constructed and have been able to get right to work when we reached the site," says Mitchell. "Mr. Collins is a great teacher and he helps you get a better understanding of what you need to do."

“Mr. Collins has the right attitude when it comes to finding ways to teach students the skills they need to succeed. He also makes connections with community service, economic development and employment individuals,” says Mason Co. ATC Principal Melanie Jamison. “Through this HH project, he has provided his students with something relevant and their work on the home has been inspected and tested. It measures up to the rigorous standards that are expected from him as well as the state inspector. The accountability of this whole endeavor is built into the project from several avenues. We are all proud of the efforts and accomplishments of Mr. Collins and his students.”



Mason Co. HH, Limestone Chapter, Resource Director Teresa Lindsay spends many hours helping with various projects to help complete the house.

“I have worked with David Collins and he’s wonderful. He does a great job with the students and without him, we

would not be as far on this house as we are. His students have provided the labor to completely wire this house and they have done a wonderful job too.



How does HH work?

Through volunteer labor and donations of money and materials, Habitat builds and rehabilitates simple, decent houses with the help of the homeowner (partner) families. Habitat houses are sold to partner families at no profit, financed with affordable loans. The homeowners' monthly mortgage payments are used to build still more Habitat houses.

Habitat is not a giveaway program. In addition to a down payment and the monthly mortgage payments, homeowners invest hundreds of hours of their own labor -- sweat equity -- into building their Habitat house and the houses of others.

For more information visit the following website:

<http://www.habitat.org/how/factsheet.aspx>

Good News Story #184

By: Fran Dundon

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